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C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 007624

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/04/2016  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [UN](#) [AL](#) [QA](#) [JO](#)  
SUBJECT: JORDAN RECALLS AMBASSADOR FROM QATAR

REF: A. AMMAN 7592  
[1](#)B. AMMAN 6932

[1](#)1. (U) SUMMARY: Jordan escalated its row with Qatar by recalling its Ambassador from Doha. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (U) The dispute between Jordan and Qatar escalated October 3 when Jordan recalled its Ambassador for "consultations." The GOJ's official spokesman explained that Jordan took this step in protest over Qatar's failure to abide by an Arab League endorsement of Jordan's candidate for UN Secretary General (ref B.) An unidentified Jordanian official, referring to recent consultations on Lebanon and the peace process between Jordan and Saudi Arabia, told the press that "Qatar had adopted a negative attitude towards Jordan because of Jordan's close relationship to Saudi Arabia." (Qatar's foreign minister himself asserted in an Al-Jazeera interview that one unnamed country sought to disrupt Jordan-Qatar relations, a sure reference to Saudi Arabia.) The unnamed Jordanian official added that "Jordanian expatriates in Qatar have been facing bureaucratic nuisances when renewing their residency permits." Approximately 15,000 Jordanians live and work in Qatar according to press reports.

[1](#)3. (C) Other Jordanian grievances with the Qataris include:

--recurring frustration with al-Jazeera broadcasts (see para 4). Jordanian officials regularly complain that al-Jazeera treats moderate Arab governments more sensationally than al-Arabiya does, and gives prominent billing to the opinions of irresponsible oppositionists.

--a certain rivalry over Middle East peace process initiatives -- the recent media reports of Qatari contacts with Abu Mazen and Hamas probably rankled.

--the GOQ's alleged closeness to Iran

--HBJ's coup in securing Israeli permission to fly to Beirut in his own plane during the Lebanon conflict, while other Arab FMs traveled in two groups aboard Egyptian and Jordanian military aircraft.

LA TIMES STORY RUNS ON AL-JAZEERA

[1](#)4. (C) The straw that broke the camel's back, however, was likely Al-Jazeera's handling of an October 1 Los Angeles Times column speculating that the situation in Jordan was similar to that in late-1970s Iran. The satellite network featured the item for an entire day October 3, on its below-screen crawler, and covered it in its hourly newscasts with side-by-side photos of King Abdullah and the late Shah.

[1](#)5. (C) Comment: The Jordanian government's anger at the GOQ is real. But the GOJ also may be encouraging an open season

on Qatar with a view toward generating some patriotic indignation at home to counter the sour mood that has developed over this summer's violence in Lebanon and the Palestinian areas. If this was the GOJ's goal, it has succeeded; even opposition Islamist politicians (ref A) have joined in the Qatar-bashing.

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